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CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS
HISTORY
OF
ANDOVER CENTER, N. H.

BY
LYMAN CLARK,

Minister of the Congregational Unitarian Society

HAVERHILL, MASS
C. C. MORSE & SON

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RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF ANDOVER CENTER.

Remember the days of old.

Deut. 32: 7.

The Scriptures admonish us to study the history of the past. This we do for the help it gives in making the history of the present and as an inspiration to future endeavors. Our subject is the Religious History of Andover Center. The sources of the information contained in this discourse may well be given.

Mrs. Hiram Fifield has kindly furnished the records of the Universalist Society, and valuable papers. Mr. Nathan Woodbury has supplied the records of the Christian Society and other papers. Mr. W. A. Batchelder has loaned a part of the Centennial address of G. E. Emery with other materials collected by him. Rev. John Thorpe has placed at my disposal three historical sermons by Rev. Howard Moody. From Miss Elizabeth A. Dodge I have received the records of the Orthodox Congregational Society; and from C. E. Carr, Esq., the records of the Congregational Unitarian Society. Information has been kindly given by many persons from recollection.

It may properly be mentioned that records of the Freewill Baptist Society, an early Unitarian Society, the early Congregational Society or church, and of the Methodist class are not found. If these could be recovered they would be a valuable addition to the sources from which the religious history of Andover must be written. There are many points upon which further information is desired. If it shall seem proper so to do a second discourse may give the results of further study of the subject.

EARLY HISTORY.

The story of the religious life of the people of Andover village is connected with the early history of the town. A brief word of this early history is necessary. The town originally consisted of a territory ten miles long and four wide, bounded on the east by the Pemigewasset river. The forty square miles were divided into eighty one shares. Of the eighty one shares two were assigned for religious uses. One was given to the first settled minister in the town, which proved to be Rev. Josiah Babcock, to be his own possession. The other of the two was to be set apart for the "support of the Gospel ministry forever;" and ten acres of land were to be reserved "to build a meeting house and school house upon, and for a training field and burying place, and any other public use the inhabitants there may have occasion for." This lot of land devoted to the support of the ministry was finally sold and converted into a fund amounting to \$1607, the interest of which was divided among the different churches of the town in proportion to their membership. Under date of March 8, 1831, as Elder Moody informs us, the town "Voted to appropriate the parsonage fund, both principal and interest for the use and benefit of the Town." Whatever may have been the legal authority for this action it appears to have been an improper conversion of the proceeds of land originally given for the "support of the Gospel ministry forever."

FREE BAPTISTS.

The Freewill Baptist denomination, now called Free Baptists, originated in New Hampshire, the first church being organized by Rev. Benjamin Randall at New Durham in 1780. The name was given because of their teaching, in opposition to the doctrine of predestination of John Calvin, that man has freedom of will.

From George E. Emery's centennial address we learn that Ebenezer Chase was ordained to the ministry in this town, 1810, by the Freewill Baptists having organized a church in this village about the year 1809. He was an able man and maintained a printing office from which was issued a paper, *The Religious Informer*. *A Life of Rev. John Colby* and other publications were also printed. Mr. Emery speaks of Rev. Ebenezer Chase as "liberal, broad spirited Christian gentleman." The Freewill Baptist society which he formed in Andover Center appears to have been the first religious society in this village of which we have account. There was at that time no church building in this village. The meetings were doubtless held at the hall in the house now the dwelling house of Hiram Fifield, or in the school house on the corner near by, or otherwise in private houses. We do not know where the society met. Mr. W. S. Carr recalls a tradition that when the school house was first built a fire-place was used for heating the room. Later a stove was put in and Amos V. Proctor was called upon for some sentiment to so important an event as the erection of this stove. After a little thought he gave this:

For twenty-five dollars we've bought us a stove;
 Worth two or three hundred, we hope it will prove,
 And keep the scholars warm while the master is teaching,
 And Thompson and Fletcher and Hutchins ars preaching.

In as much as Rev. or Elder Jesse Thompson was a Freewill Baptist minister, this tradition appears to indicate that meetings were sometimes, at least, held in the schoolhouse. Mr. Emery tells us that Jonathan Keniston was "ruling elder" and Moses Sleeper Deacon of this early society which was scattered in 1814. No information has been received of the Rev. gentlemen, Fletcher and Hutchins mentioned in the quatrain of which was used for the dedication of the school house stove.

While the Free Baptist Society is inactive, both at this place and East Andover, the religious movement represented by the denomination has been important in this vicinity. The academy at New Hampton is an institution that grew out of the interest taken by this denomination in education.

UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY.

The second religious society of which we have report, organized at Andover Center was Universalist in its religious profession. The record of its organization is before me having been preserved by Hiram Fifield. It is in these words :

At a meeting of a number of the Brethren in Andover, believing in the restoration of all men through Jesus Christ, attended on Brother Peter Fifield while he read a statement of the faith once delivered to the saints and after a few preliminary remarks on the same, voted unanimously that Brother Peter Fifield be Chairman of this meeting and Jere E. Tirrill, Clerk.

3d Voted unanimously that the Brethren present form themselves into a society for the support of the Gospel by the name of the First Universalist Society in Andover.

4th Voted that the annual meeting of this society be holden on the first Tuesday in March.

5th Voted that it be the duty of the Clerk to notify the annual meeting.

6th Voted that John Tirrill, Benj. Thompson and Sam'l Elkins be a Committee to transact all secular concerns of this Society.

7th Voted that this meeting be adjourned to the first Tuesday in March.

March 2nd 1819.

Met according to adjournment.

8th Voted that the Brethren petition the Legislature to

be incorporated by the name of the First Universal Society of Andover, N. H.

9th Voted to choose a committee to form a petition and present the same to the Legislature for the above purpose.

10th Meeting dismissed.

Jere E. Tirrill, Clerk,
Peter Fifield, Chairman.

The society was incorporated June 24th 1819. While the record does not explicitly state the fact the meeting for organization was doubtless held at the house of Peter Fifield, now occupied by his son Hiram Fifield.

The statement which was read by Peter Fifield to the meeting was not recorded and the first pages of the record book are torn out, the foregoing statement being on a sheet of paper. There is however no reason to doubt that Peter Fifield read to the meeting the Confession known as the Winchester Confession, having been adapted by the General Convention of the Universalists at Winchester, N. H., in 1803. All Universalist churches to the present time, 1897 are organized upon that statement. It is this:

Article 1. We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments contain a revelation of the character of God, and of the duty, interest, and final destination of mankind.

Article 2. We believe that there is one God, whose nature is Love, revealed in one Lord Jesus Christ, by one Holy Spirit of Grace, who will finally restore the whole family of mankind to holiness and happiness.

Article 3. We believe that holiness and true happiness are inseparably connected, and that believers ought to be careful to maintain order and practice good works, for these things are good and profitable unto men.

These, then, are the religious ideas which interested

those who organized what they first called the First Universalist and afterward the First Universal Society in Andover, N. H.

The records of the society are continued from 1820 to 1831 when the record closes without any formal dissolution of the society. Among the interesting things to be noticed is the vote, 1820, to raise the sum of sixteen dollars to defray the expenses of the year; that the meetings were variously held at the houses of J. J. Bryant, Samuel Brown, Peter Fifield, the School House in district No. 10, the house of Reuben Dearborn, Gershom Durgan, Robert Barber, the Franklin House, and the Inn of Dudley Dearborn. March 3, 1829, the society "Voted, that we direct the assessors to engage Mr. Robert Bartlett to preach with us one fourth part of the time and move him to this town, provided that other towns adjoining give sufficient encouragement to hire him the remainder of the time at the rate of fore hundred dollars per year."

The clerk of the society received Jan. 7, 1830, the following notice: "We, the undersigned wishing to become members of said society request you to insert our names as such on the records of said society, for the purpose of drawing our proportion of interest money." Signed, Joseph Whittaker, John Forsaith, Luke Converse, Versal R. Eastman, Royal F. Eastman, Hiram Eastman, Calvin Keniston, Wm. Walker, Jona Kimball. This addition to the membership was doubtless not a matter of desire for personal gain but to enable the society to receive a larger part of the proceeds of funds which I have mentioned as in care of the Town for the benefit of all religious societies.

The last entry made, March 6, 1832, is signed by Peter Fifield, societys Clerk.

BUILDING THE MEETING HOUSE.

A concise record of the proceedings which led to building the meeting-house which still forms the central portion of Proctor Academy building is found on one sheet of paper. It is as follows:

At a meeting of a number of the inhabitants of Andover holden at the house of Peter Fifield, Esq'r., on Saturday the tenth day of Nov., 1821, to consult on the propriety of building a meeting-house on the parade near Peter Fifield Esq'r's house, the following votes were taken, viz:

- 1st Chose Wm. Proctor Esq'r Chairman.
- 2nd Chose Jere Tirrill, Clerk.
- 3rd Voted to choose a committee to determine on the propriety of building a meeting-house.
- 4th Chose Lt. Daniel Huntoon, Lt. Moses Brown, Peter Fifield, Esq'r., Jonathan Brown, Wm. Proctor, Esq'r., Committee. Said Committee report that in their opinion it is expedient to build a meeting-house.
- 5th Voted to chose a committee to superintend the building of said house and procure further subscriptions.
- 6th Chose Jonathan Brown, James Tucker, Esq'r., Peter Fifield, Esq'r., Lieut. Daniel Huntoon and Benjamin Gale, Committee.
- 7th Voted to build a two story house.
- 8th Voted to refer the size and model of said house to the Committee.
- 9th Voted that it be the duty of the Clerk to make out a certificate to James Tucker, Esq'r., of his appointment, signed by the Chairman and Clerk.
- 10th Voted that this meeting be adjourned to this place to be holden on Thursday, 29 Nov. instant, ten

o'clock, A. M.

Jere E. Tirrill, Clerk.

An unsigned report of the adjourned meeting tells us that after a second adjournment to Dec. 1, the proceedings were as follows:

Saturday, Dec. 1, met according to adjournment.

The committee to whom was referred the size and modle of said house presented a modle which was accepted.

2nd Voted to build a porch instead of a Cubulow.

3rd Voted that the frame be vendued to the lowest bidder.

4th Voted to choose a committee to survey the timber and inspect it and sit the value on the same.

5th Choose Jere E. Tirrill and Aaron Cilley.

6th Voted to set it up to vendue.

7th Choose Wm. Proctor, Esq'r., Auctioneer.

8th Struck off to Wm. Cilley at one hundred eighty dollars.

9th Voted to have the house raised by the fifteenth of May next.

The last vote required the raising of the building by May 15, 1822. No records at hand show whether or not the frame was raised by that time. Probably the vote was carried out. A bill of John Taylor for supplies, chiefly for nails and rum furnished the committee during the months from July to December is unfortunately without mention of the year but it was probably during the year 1822 and indicates that the finishing was in progress at the time.

Mr. Emery, in his centennial address makes this statement concerning the Union Meeting House: "In 1824 the Union Meeting House at Andover Center was completed at a cost of about \$2200.00 Capt. Joseph Brown, Col. Joseph Sweatt, Peter Fifield, Esq'r., and

Jonathan Brown were active in the enterprise. The Universalists, Methodists and Christians joined hands in a friendly way to build the long desired and truly Catholic Church edifice. It was dedicated by appropriate exercises and with much good feeling. No spirituous liquors were used. The Rev. Thomas Worcester, of Salisbury, was the first minister to preach with regularity in the new meeting-house. He was a liberal man in religious sentiment and was an impressive speaker. His salary of \$80.00 only provided for sermons by him monthly for one year.

The statement that no spirituous liquors were at the dedication shows the existence of temperance sentiment in the place at that early time. And yet a bill for articles furnished the building committee by John Taylor shows that rum was deemed a part of the necessary supplies for finishing the meeting-house, nails, glass and rum being called for with equal freedom. This bill which was paid by note due in one year, is preserved at the house of Hiram Fifield.

The building was harmoniously occupied by four denominations at the same time each having the use for one Sunday in the month. The first minister, Rev. Thomas Worcester, was Congregationalist. The other denominations that alternated in the use of the building were at a later date, perhaps, Methodists, Free Will Baptists and Universalists.

This harmonious use of the meeting-house by four denominations at once, and the harmonious relinquishment of the church to the Christian Denomination at a later date, are quite remarkable as indicating a liberal spirit of fellowship among the people; "no meeting-house troubles" being reported with reference to the use or disposition of the building.

THE METHODISTS.

No records are at hand to show the doings of the

disciples of John Wesley in Andover, but frequent reports of Methodist services are heard. A census of the church membership for the purpose of the distribution of the income of the church funds was made in the year 1822 with this result: Union Baptist Society, 152 members; Universal Society, 44; Congregational Society, 24 and the Calvinistic Baptist Society, 16 members. The Methodists are not included in this distribution, showing that none were organized at that time; but later, perhaps from 1830 to 1840, later or earlier, their activity is reported. William Proctor showed large hospitality to their ministers in passing through the town and co-operated with them but found reason for restricting his hospitality by posting a card over the hook at which horses were usually tied to this effect:

“ A home for all preachers of the Gospel,
But not a harbor for abolitionists.”

A grand daughter of Mr. Proctor, Mrs. Betsy Scales, reports that after this the Methodist preachers came less frequently. A rule of the Methodist church relative to slavery is in these words,—“We therefore affectionately admonish all our preachers and people to keep themselves pure from this great evil, and seek its extirpation by all lawful and Christian means.” The standards of the Methodist church were opposed to slavery, this fact resulting in a division of the denomination and the organization of the Methodist Church South. It does not appear from any history at hand that this division has ever been so far healed as to result in a reunion of the two branches of the Methodist Church. Mr. Daniel Davis testifies that their zeal in Andover was such as to make the woods resonant with their prayers at night. Since the organization of the 2nd Christian Society in Andover the Methodists appear to have been less active and no organization appears to have continued.

MILLERISM.

Millerism was preached in Andover but the sanity of the people is said to have prevented its making any considerable impression upon them. Their preachers were heard in an unbelieving frame of mind if at all.

Mrs. Daniel Davis, when visiting friends in Warner who were waiting for the end of the world and neglecting the care of this world's goods as of no further interest to them, made practical application of her disbelief by offering to receive some of the things that they were to have no further need for, upon which her sleigh was loaded with household goods which she brought home with her upon her return.

THE SECOND CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

The records of the Second Christian Church began August 19, 1843 and close Nov. 7, 1876. Under the former date we are informed that "Pursuant to previous arrangement the friends of primitive Christianity met at the meeting-house in the upper parish in Andover on Saturday the 19th of August, 1843 and proceeded as follows: The exercises were introduced by singing and prayer and remarks by Elder E. Shaw, explanatory of the object of the meeting, &c. The following persons signified their purpose to recognize each other as members of the Church of God, receiving the New Testament as their rule of faith and practice." Names,—Ebenezer Tucker, David Davis, James Farnum, Stephen Cilley, Nathan Woodbury, Cynthia Roberts, Apphia Woodbury, Sarah Tucker and Martha Loretta Philbrick.

Nathan Woodbury was chosen Clerk of the Church. Nathan Woodbury, son, thus summarizes the history of the church, "Nov. 7, 1875. Elder A. H. Martin presided at a communion season.

This is the last church ordinance recorded.

The total number of members rec'd by the organization,

Dropped by their own request,	5
Died,	14
Dismissed,	6
Members remaining, 1875,	7"
" Ministers or Pastors.	

Elders, Elijah Shaw, Wm. Morrill, Wm. H. Nason, John Burden, S. W. Whitney, Thomas Bartlett and A. H. Martin."

It will be seen from this summary that the membership was small in number. The Clerk in one of his letters calls it a "feeble band," and yet the church exercised an important influence on the history of the town. In July 1856 the church property, with the free consent of those interested passed into the control of the Christian denomination and the support of the Andover Academy, which had been maintained undenominationally for eight years, passed to this denomination.

The school was given the name, New England Christian Literary and Biblical Institute, afterward shortened to New England Christian Institute. For twenty-three years or until 1879 the school was maintained by this denomination, although removed for a time to Wolfeboro. The Boarding hall was erected and nearly ready for occupation when financial difficulties led to the sale of the property to the Unitarian Educational Society.

CONGREGATIONALISTS.

The first minister settled in the town of Andover was Rev. Josiah Badcock, a Congregationalist, at East Andover. The early society appears to have been repeatedly suspended and re-organized at later dates. A Congregationalist, Rev. Thomas Worcester was first to preach in the Andover meeting-house. A Congregational society was maintained in Andover Center, the records of which are not at hand. Rev. Nathan How-

ard, who lived at West Andover, preached here and at Wilmot between the years 1843 and 1854. He now lives at Prairie, Grant Co., Oklahoma Ter. This society appears to have been merged in the society at East Andover, and to have suspended services at Andover. A new society was organized Oct. 14, 1880, under the name of the Orthodox Congregational Church, of Andover, Cen. N. H. Rev. Howard Moody presided at the meeting for organization. Its Confession of Faith is as follows:

“As a Church of Jesus Christ, associated in accordance with the teachings of the New Testament, for the public worship of God, for the observance of the gospel sacraments and ordinances, for mutual edification and encouragement in the Christian Life, and for the advancement of the Redeemer’s Kingdom, we declare our union in Faith and Love with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ.

“Receiving the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the word of God and the only infallible rule of religious faith and practice, we confess our faith in the one living and true God, revealed as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; the Creator and Preserver of all things, whose purposes and providence extend to all events, and who exercises a righteous government over all his creatures.

“We believe in the universal sinfulness and ruin of our race; since’ By one man sin entered the world and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.

“We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, having taken upon himself our nature, has, by his obedience, sufferings and death, provided a way of salvation for all mankind: and that through faith in his name whosoever will may be saved.

“We believe that although salvation is offered freely to all, they only repent and believe in Christ, who in thus obeying the gospel are regenerated by the Holy Spirit; and that all who are thus regenerated are, kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation.

“We believe that the Christian Sabbath, the Ministry of the Word, the visible Church, and the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are divinely appointed and are binding on the followers of Christ until His coming.

“We believe that there is a day appointed, in which God will raise the dead and judge the world: that the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal.”

A council of churches was called which approved the articles of organization from which this confession is taken, Nov. 16, 1880, and the following members were received: William Woodbury, Mrs. Lucy P. Martin Woodbury, Leonard Palmer, Mrs. Lois H. Elliott Palmer, Mrs. Elizabeth Conant Proctor, Mrs. Charlotte A. S. Woodman Thompson, John S. Tucker, Mrs. Eliza Roberts Tucker, Miss Eliza Woodbury, George White, Mrs. Jennie P. Thompson White, John R. Bates, Mrs. Nancy J. Morrill Bates, Mrs. Lucy M. Smith Currier, Miss Martha J. Clark, George H. Chase, Mrs. Nellie M. Martin Chase, and Willis D. Howard.

William Woodbury and Leonard Palmer were ordained deacons.

The church has had two settled pastors, Rev. Howard Moody, 1880–1884, and Rev. John Thorpe from 1894 to the present time. Among those who have preached as supplies during the ten years 1884–94 are, Rev. Frederick Chutter, 1886; Rev. Elisha A. Keep, 1887; Rev. George F. Kengott, 1888; Rev. Frederick B. Noyes, 1889; Rev. E. J. Aiken, 1890; Rev. N. F. Carter, 1890;

Rev. H. W. L. Thurston, 1891; Rev. Egbert Smyth Ellis, 1892; Rev. Harvey Sawyer, 1893; Rev. Thomas J. Lewis, 1894.

The Chapel was built 1882. It was dedicated and Rev. Howard Moody installed Sept. 26, 1882.

UNITARIAN SOCIETY.

Emery's centennial address quotes the historian, J. B. Moore, as saying that a "Unitarian 'Society' was formed in Andover in 1830," and states that no records of the society were found. Whether this society was at Andover or East Andover is not indicated. Inasmuch as there was a Universalist Society at Andover it seems probable that this early Unitarian Society was at East Andover. Information of this society would be very welcome if it could be found.

The present Congregational Unitarian Society of Andover was organized in 1879. The first of the articles of organization states that "The object of this Society shall be united effort in the study and practice of Christianity." This is its only creed, which is in harmony with the constitution of the National Conference of Unitarian and other Christian Churches which declares that "These churches accept the religion of Jesus holding, in accordance with his teaching that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man."

The signatures to the constitution at the time of the first annual meeting, 1880, were, John P. Carr, Amos H. Proctor, Joseph Baker, Emeline Proctor, Alma E. Campbell, Robert C. Carr, Emily A. Carr, Mrs. H. R. Fellows, Mary A. Brown, Frank W. Proctor, Lewis P. Carr, Mrs. Lewis P. Carr, Clarence E. Carr, Carrie E. Carr, Sarah E. Proctor, Mrs. H. F. French. Many others were members by virtue of contribution to the support of the society. The number of signatures to the constitution as amended 1892 is seventy-seven.

The pastors of the society have been Rev. Calvin Stebbins, from Oct. 1879 to Sept. 1881; Rev. Crawford Nightingale, from Sept. 1881 to the summer of 1882; Rev. Thomas Thompson, from July 1882 to fall of 1886; Rev. W. A. Buxton, Nov. 18, 1887 to Jan. 13, 1889; and Lyman Clark, from Jan. 1890 to the present time, Sept. 1897.

The society has from the beginning co-operated with the Unitarian Educational Society in the maintenance of Proctor Academy, the church and the Academy being alike objects of its care.

Seventy-seven names have been received and subscribed to the constitution as amended 1892.

ROMAN CATHOLIC.

No Roman Catholic Church Edifice has been erected in Andover. Services have been held at private houses, conducted by the Reverend pastors at Lebanon.

THE COMMON ELEMENT.

If we think for a moment of the religious ideas for which these several denominations have stood we find a common element in them all. They all believe in God, immortality, and righteousness of life; all have the Bible as their great book of religion; all cultivate discipleship of Jesus Christ. Doubtless they all have stood largely for truth, honesty, temperance, purity, and the improvement of human society. They may have differed about a thousand points of teaching or of experience but the great things about which they are agreed are the important things.

The creeds which have been read are commonly short. The Methodist articles of religion are twenty five in number and were not read. They are in the language of John Wesley and are like the laws of the Medes and the Persians which change not.

A large element of liberality is found in most if not

all of these denominations. The confession of the Orthodox Congregational Church declares its union with "all who love our Lord Jesus Christ." The statements of the Christian, Universalist, and Unitarian societies, as they appear in these records, differ in some respects but not essentially. The Free Baptist societies show a large amount of independence of religious thought.

Our country is showing the fact that the Roman Catholic church has its broad minded, liberal men. We have large reason to be hopeful of the future of religious thought in this town and the world at large.

The advancement of human life, the improvement of this town, depend largely upon a recognition of our common brotherhood of humanity, and upon the people working together in a friendly spirit rather than by maintaining hostile and divisive camps which war one upon another.

THE UNTOLD STORY.

Jesus once said to the disciples, I have many things to say unto you but ye cannot bear them *now*. So with the conclusion of this story. At a proper time it would be interesting to speak of some of the workers in this field. Brief accounts of the lives of some of the Andover people are needed and would be useful for encouragement and example. For the conclusion of this discourse let me simply mention the names of a few. John Proctor who built this hall and donated the use of it for religious purposes should not be overlooked. Rev. H. C. Duganne, of the Christian Society, who entered upon the work of charity administration in Lowell, deserves a memorial of his good work. Rev. John Langdon Dudley, a son of one of the Universalist families, was one whose life might well serve for an entire discourse. Although he was not one who was settled in the ministry here he went out from the town. Rev. A. H. Martin

was one whose liberality of disposition led to his being largely supported in his work by a union congregation. Rev. Crawford Nightingale, who came to his death as the result of an infirmity of hearing, may well be remembered for his genial combativeness of religious temper. If I were ready to tell these and other stories you could not bear them now. They must remain for some future occasion if that shall be found.



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